

Norwalk Planning & Zoning Commission
125 East Avenue
Norwalk, Connecticut

August 2, 2023

To: Planning & Zoning Commission – Louis Schulman, Chairman
From: Steve Kleppin, Director of Planning & Zoning Commission
Bryan Baker, Principal Planner
Re: #2023-19 R/M – Planning & Zoning Commission – Zoning text amendment for complete re-write of the zoning regulations and map amendment for complete re-zoning of the entire city

Commissioners,

This memorandum provides clarification and rationale regarding the latest revisions to the draft zoning map.

Since this is a city led initiative and not an outside application, it will be important to get broad agreement on the proposed changes to the zoning. While putting a document together that fulfills everyone's desires is not likely, consensus amongst the Commissioners is very important.

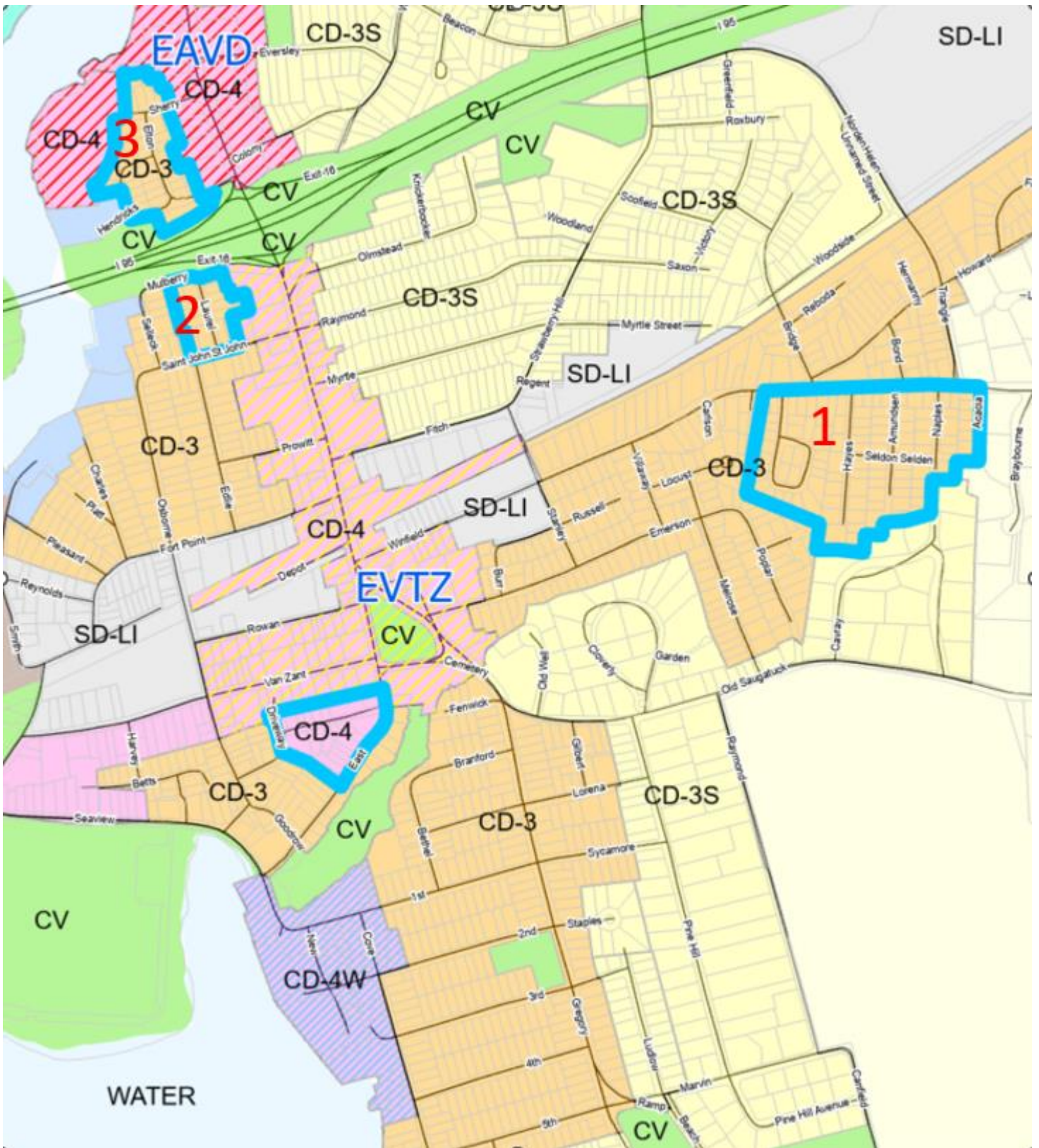
Based on Commission discussion and public comment, the scope and scale of the initial upzoning was broader than what is palatable at this time. The Commission comments regarding upzoning was fairly split on the initial recommendations. Based on that, Staff has scaled back the upzoning significantly, while still providing some areas for soft growth, without the concerns of significantly altering the fabric of existing neighborhoods.

There are 21,917 parcels within the city. Initially there were 6,685 proposed for upzoning. The draft map that went to public hearing contained a total 4,260 parcels proposed for upzoning. The latest draft reduces the number of parcels for upzoning to 1,253, 711 of which are currently single-family. The 1,253 parcels represent approximately 5.7% of all parcels in the city.

The areas that are highlighted within this memorandum are the only parcels recommended for upzoning, meaning that all other areas that are not mentioned can be assumed to remain in a zone that is consistent with their existing zoning designation.

This memorandum will show the latest proposed zoning map and how it relates to both the existing zoning map, the existing uses within those areas as well as references to historical zoning maps, where applicable.

East Norwalk:

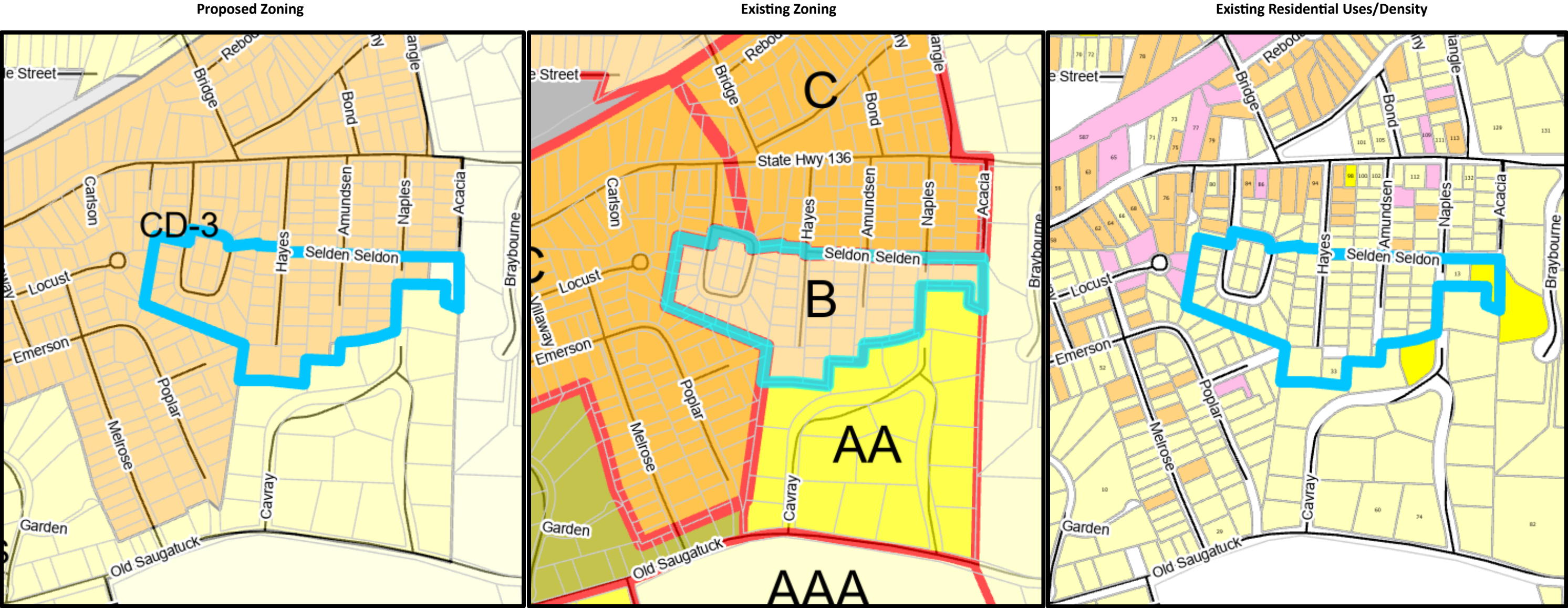


As shown on the map highlighted in light blue, there are four areas that remain as being proposed to be upzoned in East Norwalk which include the Seldon Street area south of Winfield Street, Laurel Street and Elton Court area to the west of East Avenue and the Cottage Street area.

Seldon Street

These neighborhoods today are currently zoned as B Residence and are proposed to be upzoned into the CD-3, allowing for two-family residences (duplexes).

The Seldon Street area (1) proposed to be upzoned, includes a total of 49 parcels. Each of these parcels are accessed via Winfield Court, Hayes Avenue, Amundsen Street, Naples Avenue and Acacia Street, respectively. All these streets currently are split between the C Residence Zone (two-family) and B Residence Zone (single-family), meaning that the northern half of the streets already allow for two-family residences, but the southern half of the streets do not allow for two-family residences. Therefore, each of these streets have the ability and capacity to provide for housing types such as duplexes and the new zone lines should reflect that continuity throughout the streets. In looking at the lots in the areas zoned B and C, some of the lots in the B zoned areas are actually larger than some of the C zoned lots. Furthermore, the C Residence Zone surrounds this area to the north up to the rail line and to the southwest in the Emerson and Melrose neighborhoods. It is important to reiterate the B zoned properties can already construct a detached ADU and that any dwelling that becomes a 2-family must provide 4 compliant, off-street parking spaces.

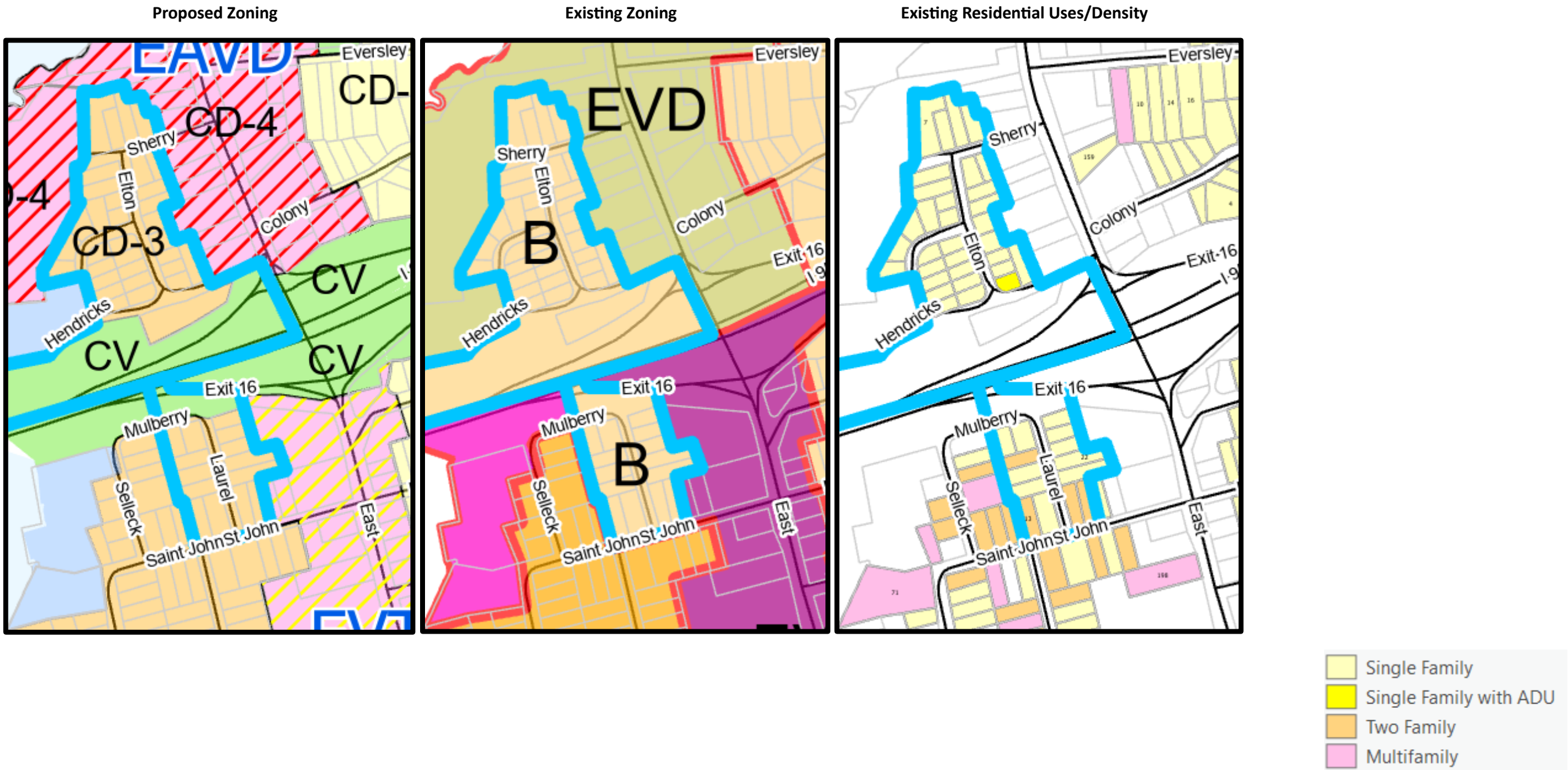


- Single Family
- Single Family with ADU
- Two Family
- Multifamily

Laurel Street/Elton Court

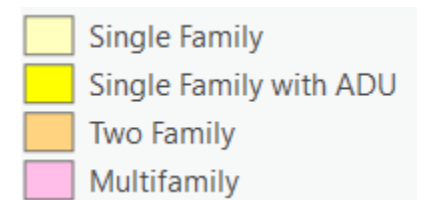
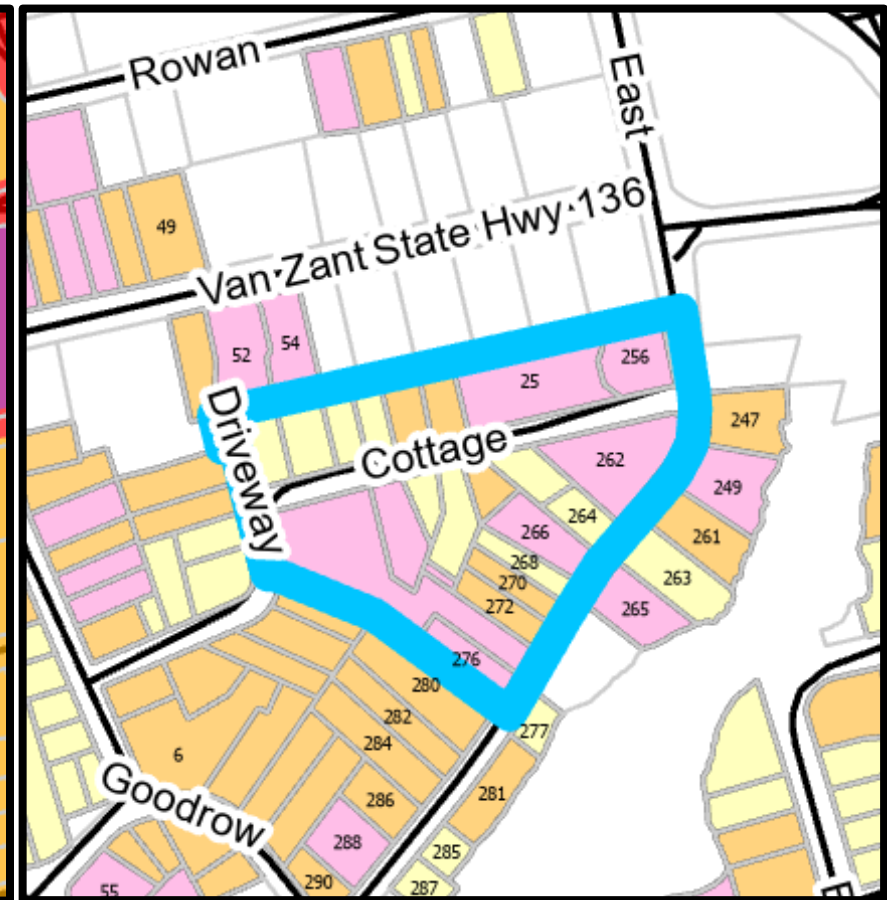
The Laurel Street area (2) represents a total of 14 parcels proposed to be upzoned from B Residence to the CD-3 Zone. Laurel Street is accessed via East Avenue (EVTZ, mixed-use) and westbound along St. John Street (C Residence). Traveling north along Laurel Street to Mulberry Lane, an existing zone line splits the area between the B Residence Zone and the C Residence Zone despite the street’s similarities. In addition, many of the parcels in this area already 2-family dwellings. Unlike other areas in East Norwalk initially proposed for upzoning, this area is surrounded by 2-family or multi-family is located less than ½ mile from the train station and quickly accessed from Exit 16.

The Elton Street area (3) represents a total of 33 parcels proposed to be upzoned from B Residence to the CD-3 Zone. Like Laurel Street, these neighborhoods are accessed via East Avenue or Selleck Street under the I-95 overpass. The area is surrounded by the existing East Avenue Village District (EAVD), a mixed-use zone that runs along East Avenue north of I-95.

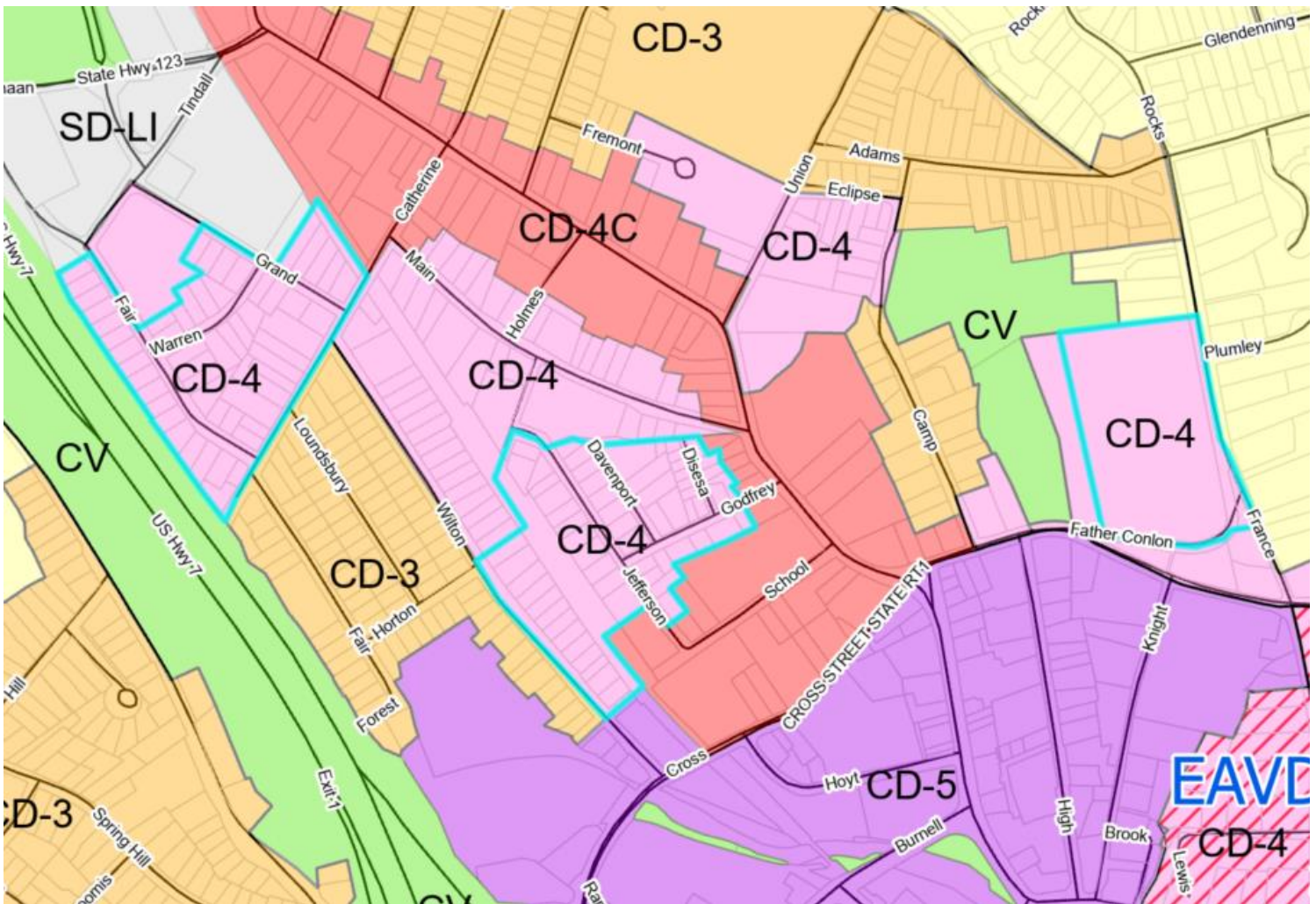


The Cottage Street area, representing 21 properties, is currently zoned as C Residence, and is proposed to be upzoned to the CD-4 Zone which allows multifamily and mixed-use developments. Along Cottage Street, as well as the western half of East Avenue, there are already have many multifamily developments and therefore such an upzone would bring those properties into conformity and not represent a drastic change in the type of developments that the area is already familiar with.

Existing Residential Uses/Density



Main Street:



As shown on the map highlighted in blue, there are three neighborhoods in the Main Street area of the city that are proposed to remain to be upzoned. These areas include the Fair-Warren-Grand Street(s) area, Jefferson-Davenport-Godfrey Street(s) area and the western half of France Street near St. Phillips Church.

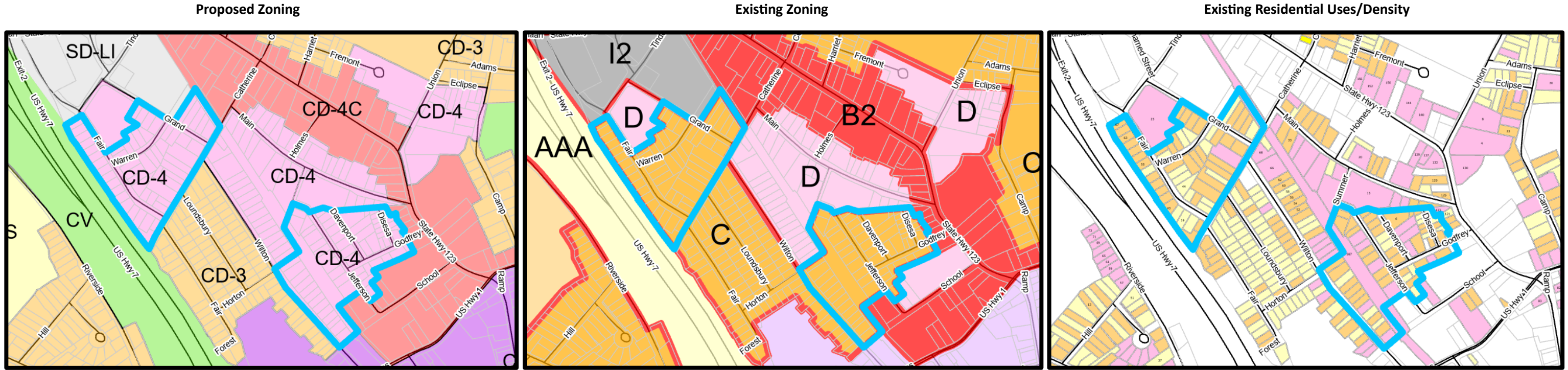
The one parcel proposed for upzoning in the Father Conlon/France Street area is proposed to be rezoned from B Residence to CD-4, which is the Saint Phillips Church property.

Fair-Warren-Grand Street(s)

This area, totaling 55 properties, is currently zoned as C Residence and contains mostly two-family residence, but also contains some multi-families and some single families. It is abutted to the north by the Industrial No. 2 Zone (light industrial) and D Residence (multifamily), to the south by both C Residence and D Residence and to the east by Business No. 2 (commercial). Because multifamily, mixed-use, and industrial zoning are in nearby proximity and located along the same street network, this area continues to present the opportunity for the potential of properties to add an additional dwelling unit or two, if all required off-street parking can be accommodated.

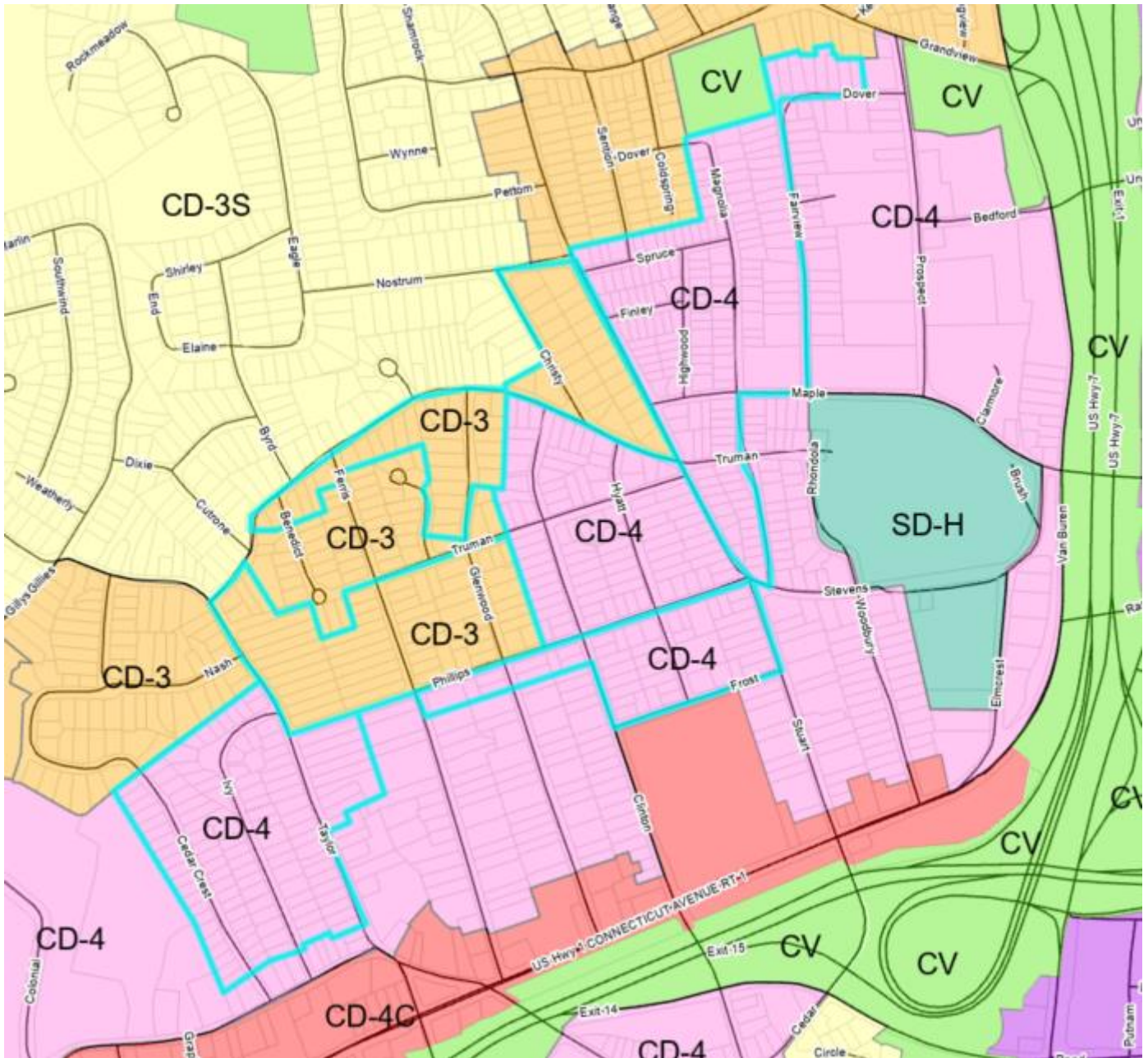
Jefferson-Davenport-Godfrey Street(s)

Like the Fair-Warren-Grand neighborhoods, these 60 properties are currently zoned as C Residence and are bordered to the north by D Residence, to the east by Business No. 2, to the south by the Central Business District (mixed-use) and to the west by C Residence. These neighborhoods contain many duplexes as well as existing multifamily residences, a few single-family properties and so those uses are already part of the neighborhood and date back to the original 1929 zoning map where much of this area had previously been zoned as D Residence allowing the original construction of these multifamily residences.



1929 Zoning Map

Hospital Hill:

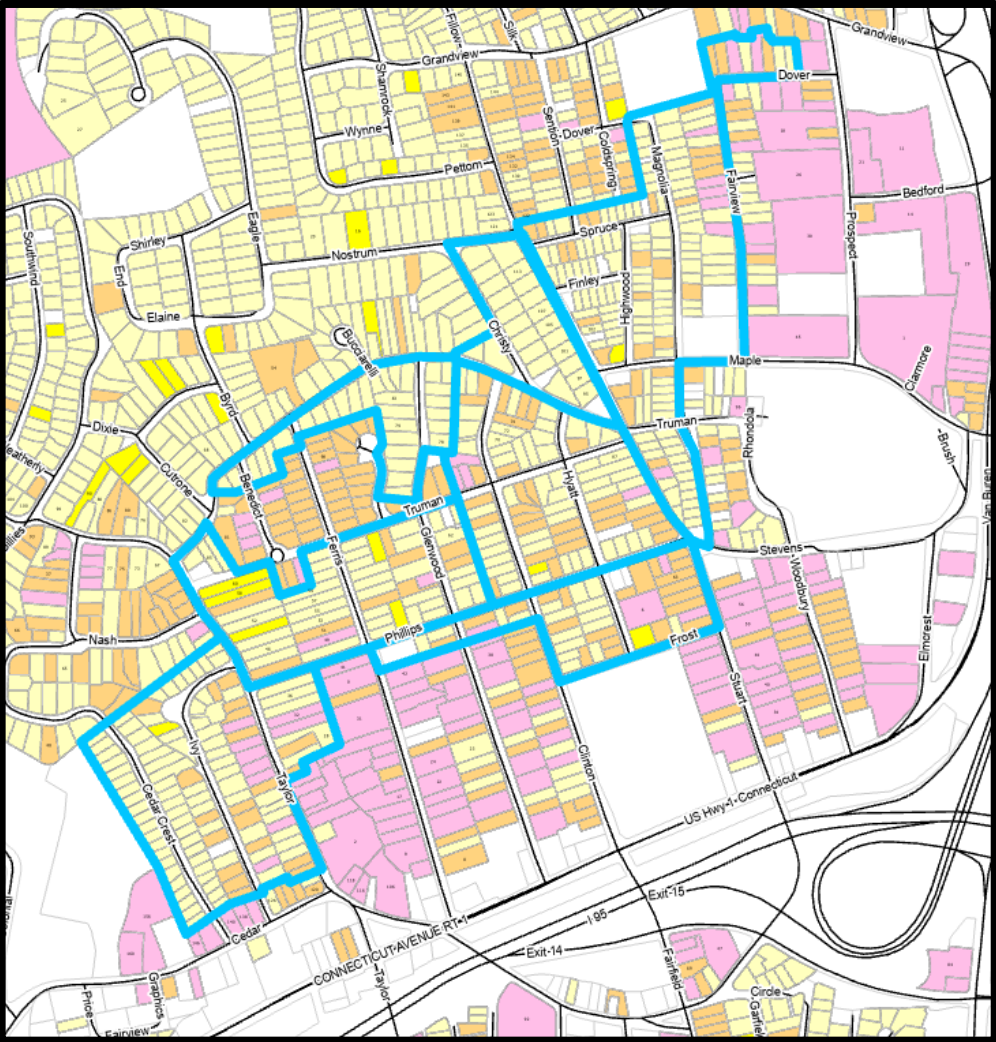
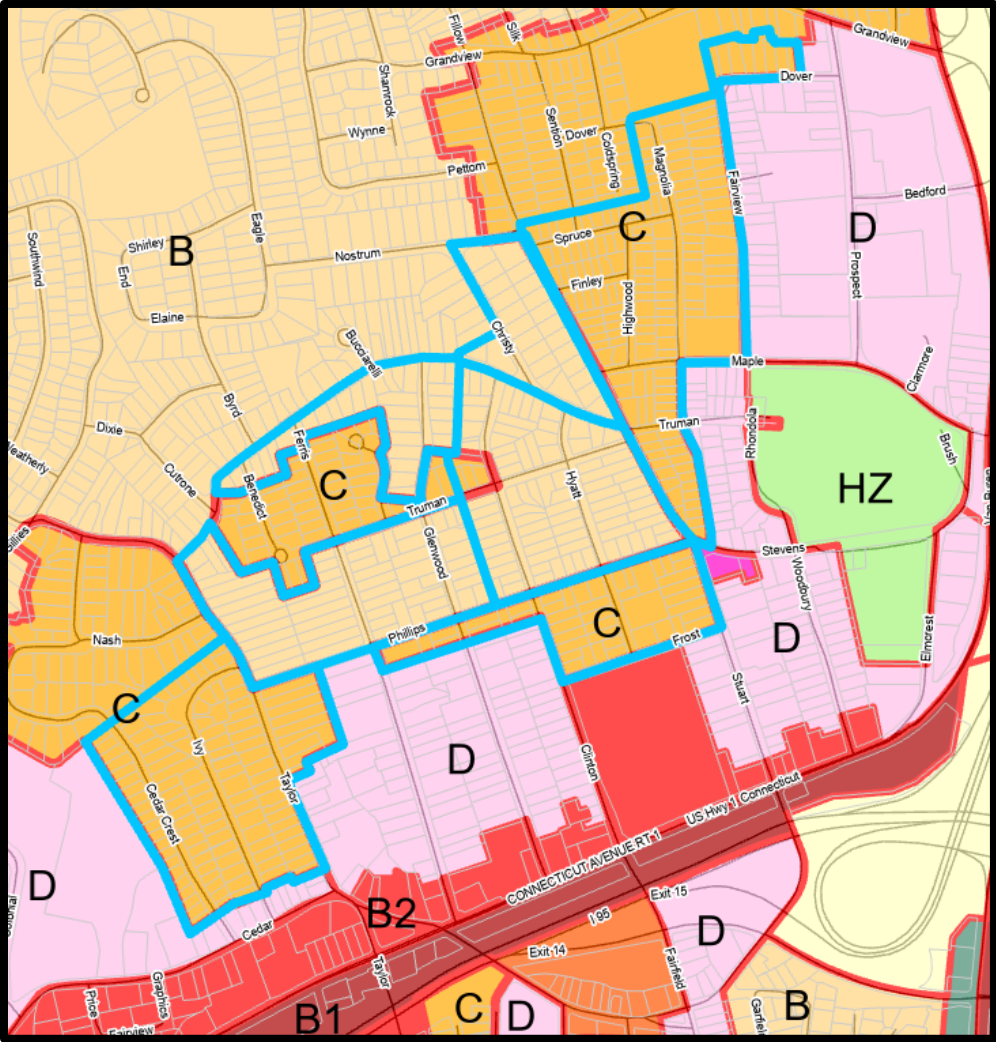
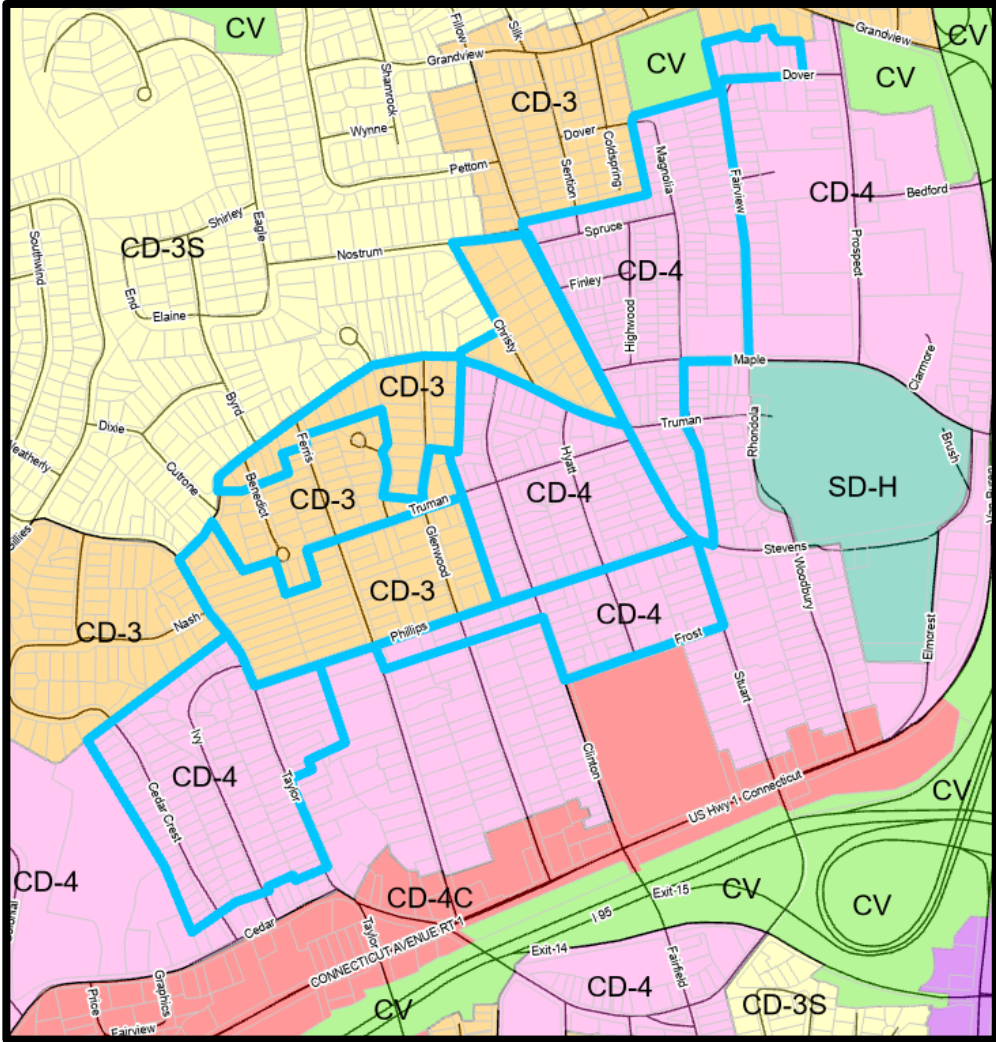


The Hospital Hill area contains the broadest upzone which is largely due to the existing mix of multiple zones in a relatively small area. And as discussed previously, considering that the hospital is one of the most significant employers in the city, providing additional housing options in this area is important to employees and will lead to less dependence on automobiles to get to work. The total number of properties proposed to be upzoned in the area is 360, which is approximately 1/3 of the total number of parcels proposed for upzoning. Traveling northbound from Route 1 (commercial) represented in red, much of the existing streets are zoned as D Residence (multifamily) like Clinton Avenue, Glenwood Avenue, Ferris Avenue, Stuart Avenue and Woodbury Avenue. At different distances along these streets, the zone changes from D Residence to C Residence (two-family) and in the case of Ferris Avenue, transitions from D Residence to B Residence (single-family) back to C Residence. Staff recommends that these areas be re-zoned, as shown on the map above to better transition from higher intensity mixed-use development along Route 1, to lower intensity mixed-use developments in the CD-4, to two-family residences in the CD-3 and then to single-family residences in the CD-3S. The existing neighborhoods and streets accommodate many multifamily and duplexes today and are well connected to Route 1 as well Norwalk Hospital. Therefore, increasing housing options, particularly affordable housing options, in this area for these major job centers is important for the future development of the city.

Proposed Zoning

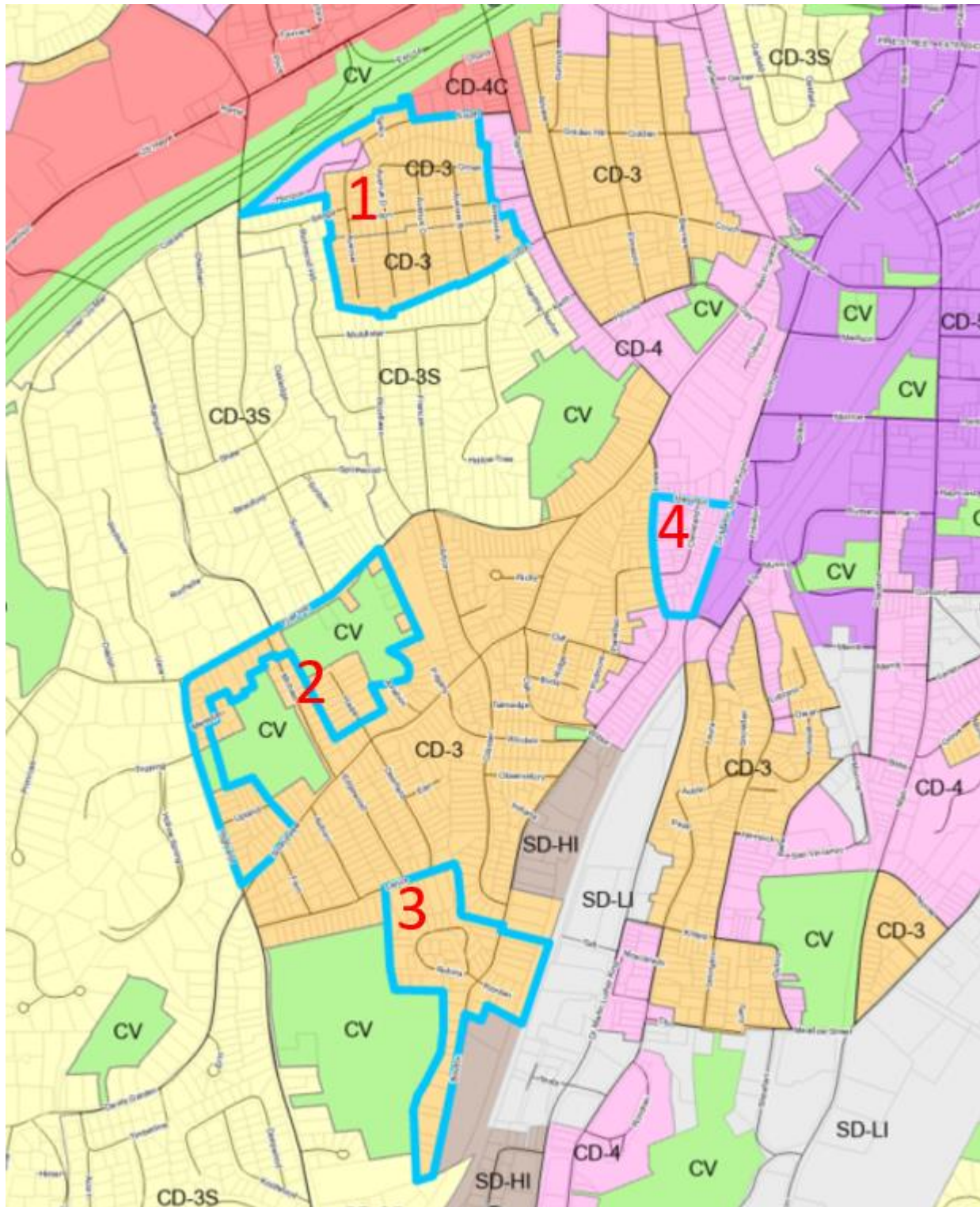
Existing Zoning

Existing Residential Uses/Density



- Single Family
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- Two Family
- Multifamily

Flax Hill/South Norwalk:

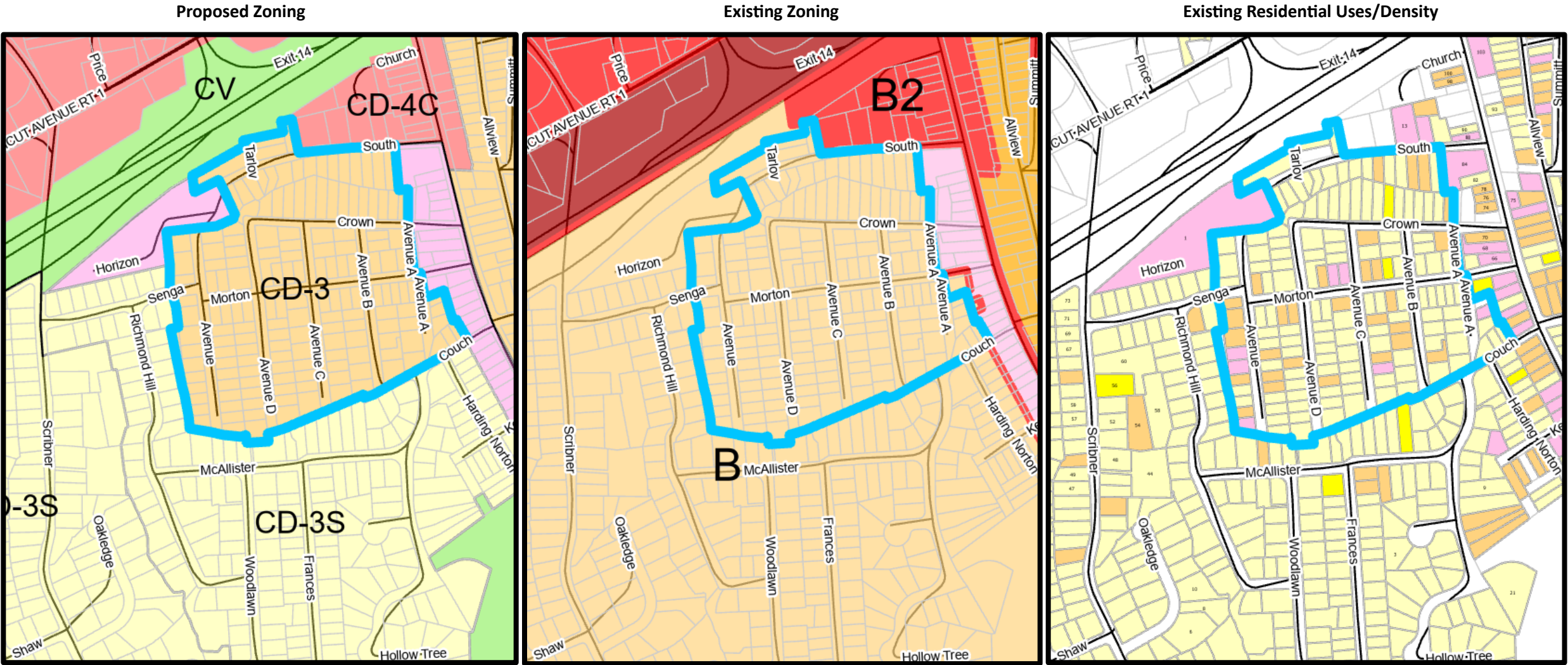


There are four areas proposed for upzoning in this area:

1. Avenue A-E Area
2. Flax Hill/Highland Ave
3. Bouton St/Robin's Sqr.
4. Lowe St/Cleveland Terrace

Avenue A-E Area (1)

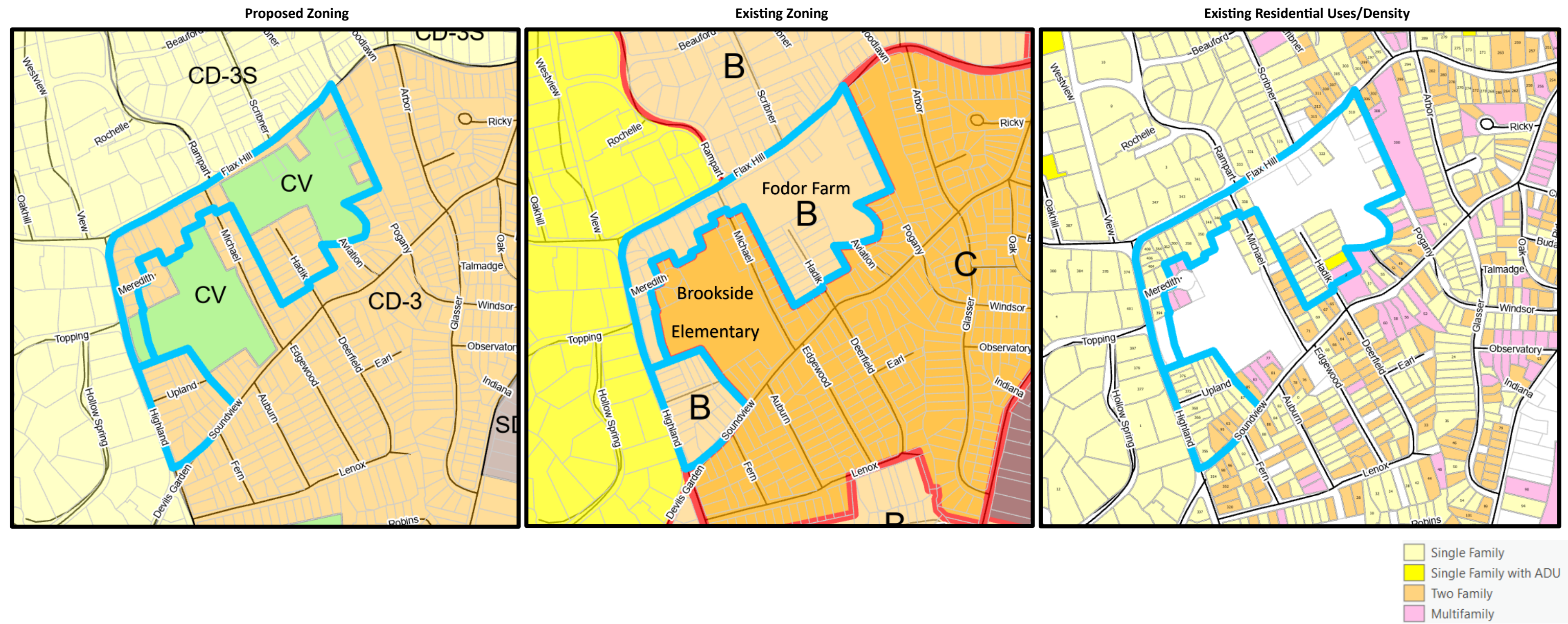
The Avenue A-E area, 162 properties in total, is currently zoned as B Residence (single-family) and is recommended to be upzoned to the CD-3 Zone (two-family). Immediately to the east of this area is Taylor Avenue which is zoned as a D Residence (multifamily) on the west side and C Residence (two-family) moving eastbound towards Golden Hill. Many duplexes are already existing in these neighborhoods, mostly due to the original 1929 zoning of this area being C Residence. Since 1929 the neighborhoods have been downzoned to B Residence, but the duplexes have remained. By re-zoning the area to CD-3, these properties would once again become conforming two-family homes.



1929 Zoning of the Avenue A-E Area

Flax Hill Road and Highland Avenue (2)

Flax Hill Road and Highland Avenue is currently zoned as B Residence and is proposed to be upzoned into the CD-3 Zone. The overall number of parcels that would be affected is 55. Much of the adjacent neighborhoods, specifically to the south and east of this area is zoned as C Residence (two-family) and streets such as Michael Street and Hadik Street are bisected by the existing zone line, designated parts of the street as B Residence and other parts as C Residence. Staff recommends that these properties be included in the CD-3 which would create a more predictable reduction in density where Highland Avenue would become the transition line from two-family residences to single-family residences. In addition, several parcels in the area proposed for upzoning are existing three-family or multi-family.



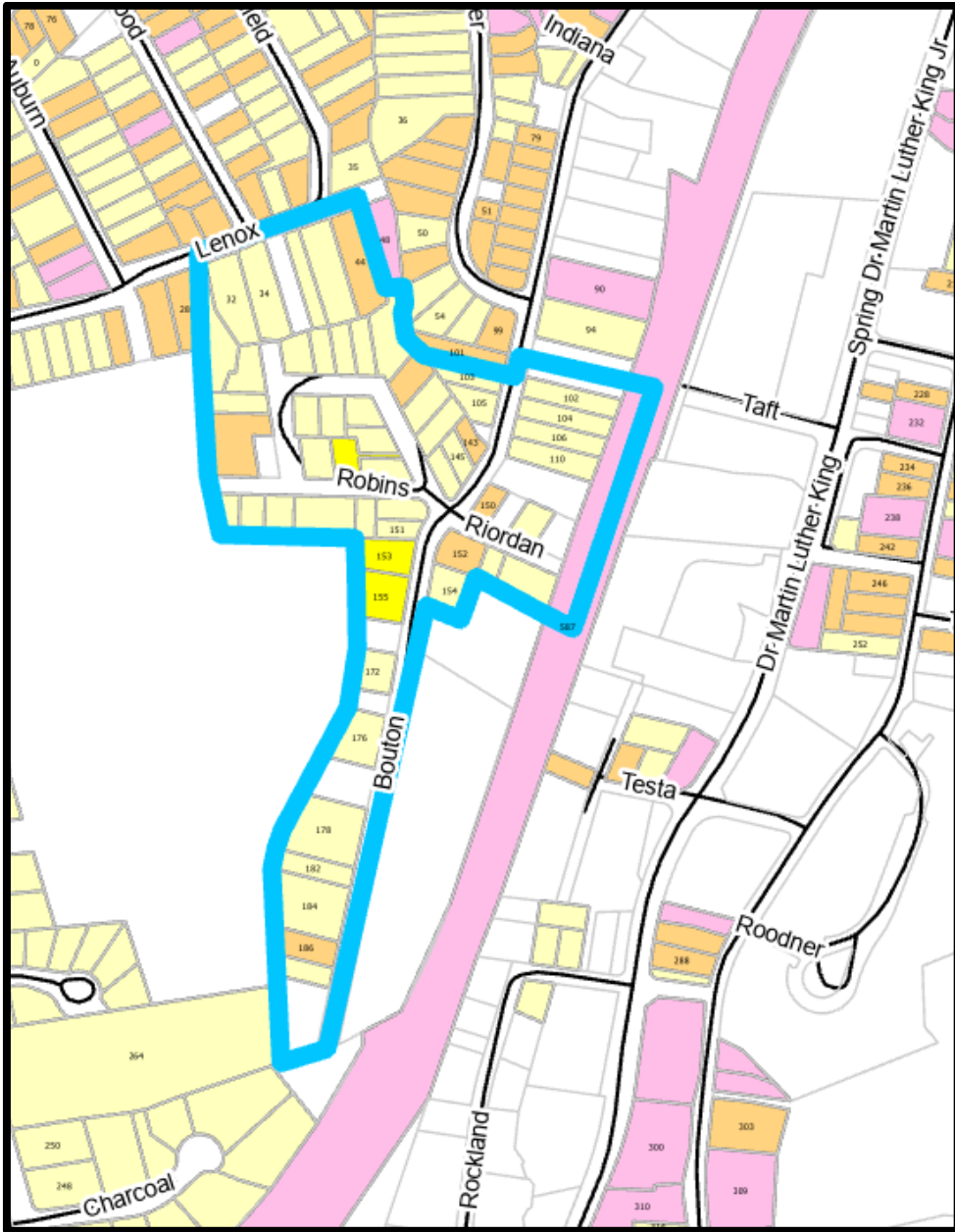
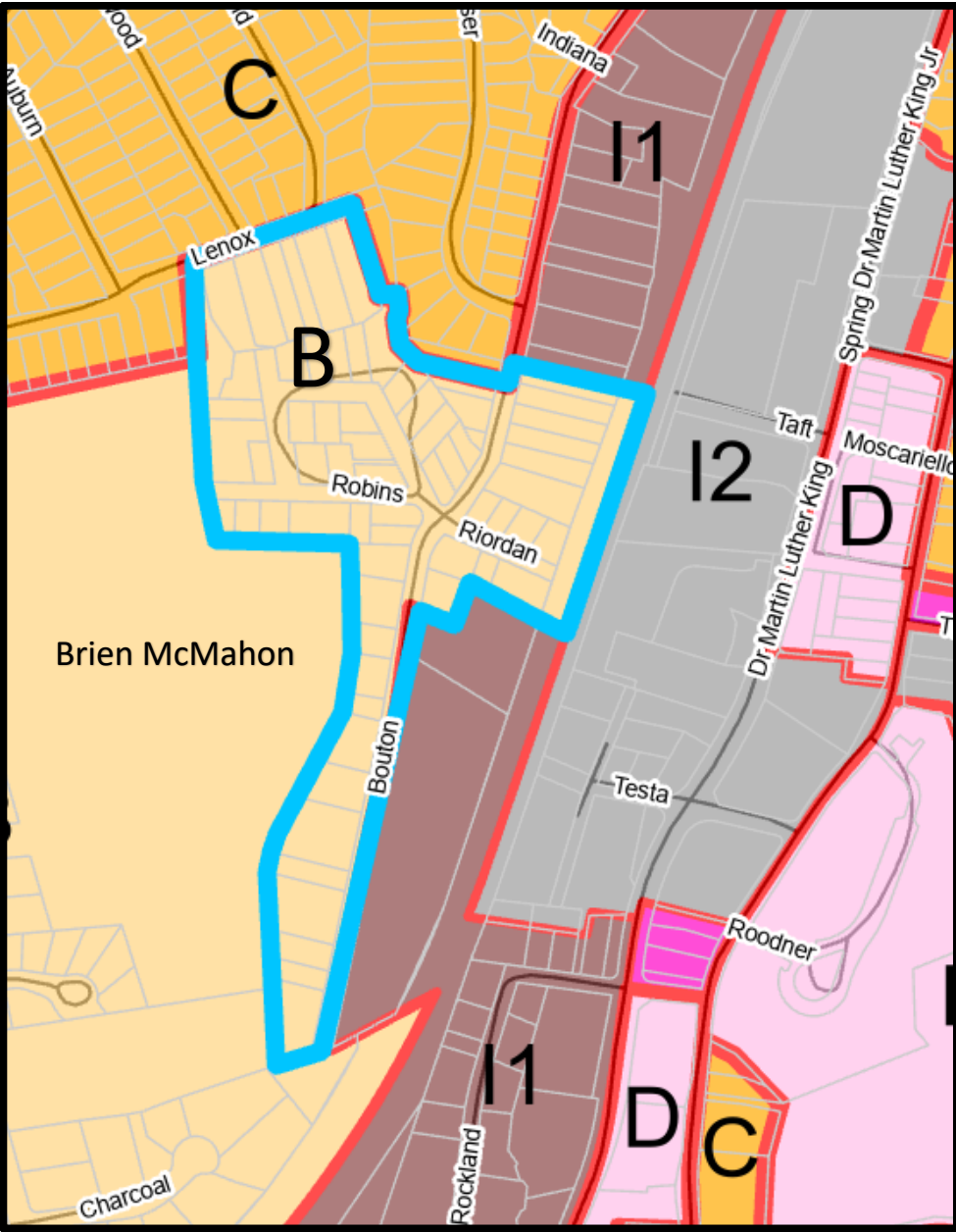
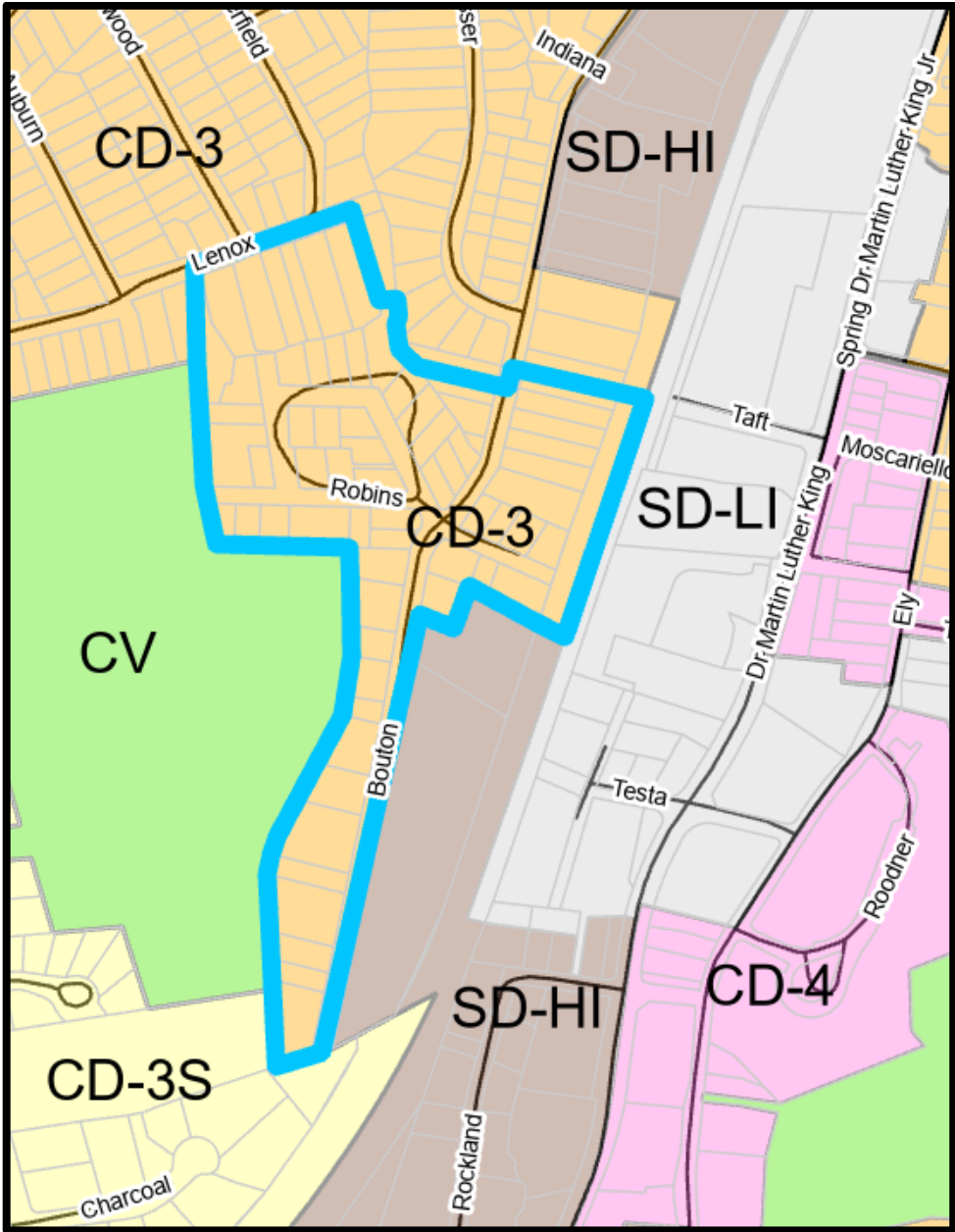
Bouton Street/Robin's Square (3)

The southern leg of Bouton Street and where the Robins Square neighborhood is today, is currently zoned as B Residence and represents 67 properties. Staff recommends upzoning these parcels into the CD-3 which would match the zoning along the northern leg of Bouton Street as well as the neighborhoods off Soundview Avenue. To access this area, you travel through either two-family, commercial, or industrial zones. This area already contains some two-family and multi-family dwellings and given its proximity to industrial and employment areas to the east, upzoning provides a transition from single-family to more intense commercial uses.

Proposed Zoning

Existing Zoning

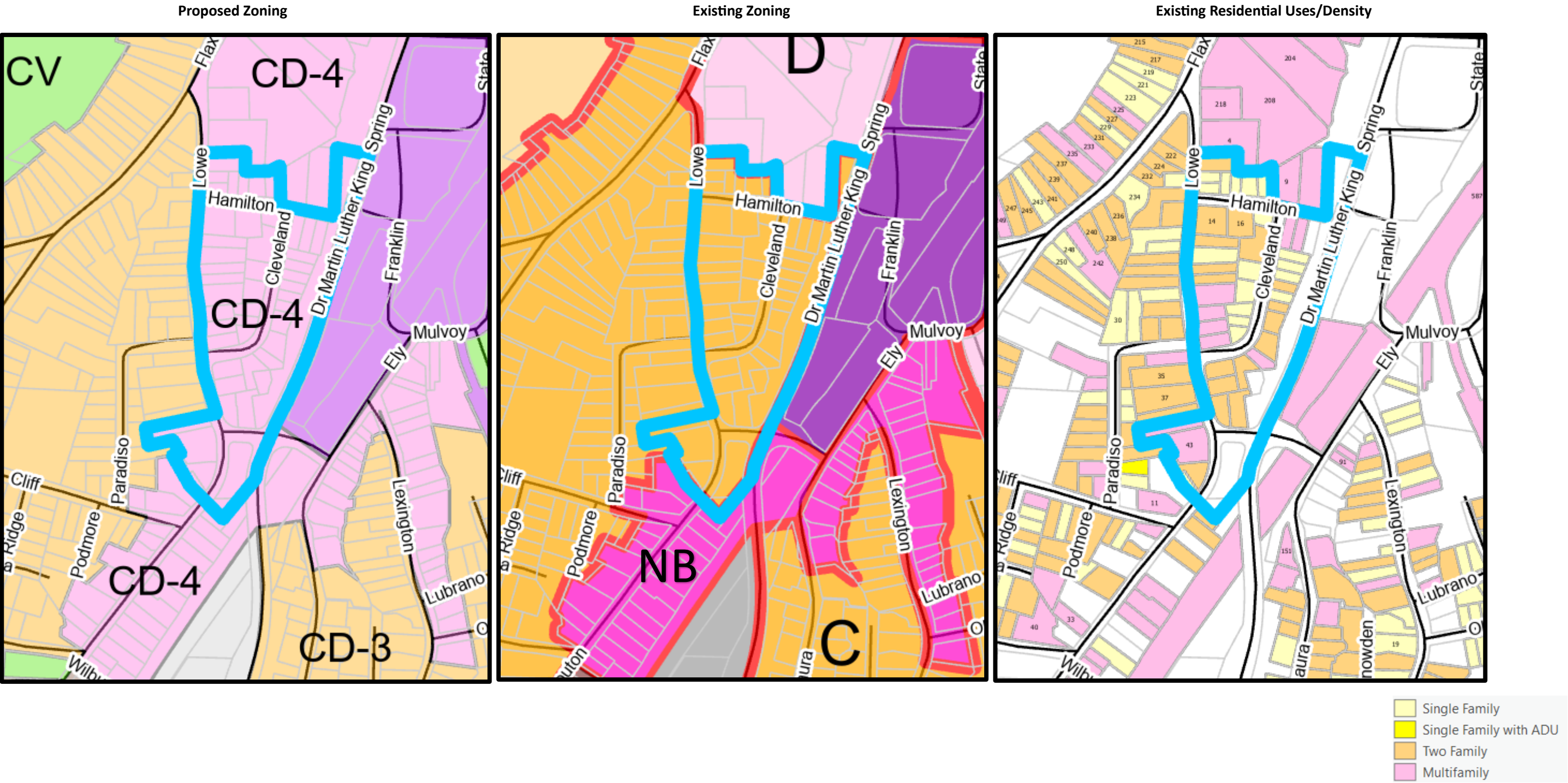
Existing Residential Uses/Density



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- Two Family
- Multifamily

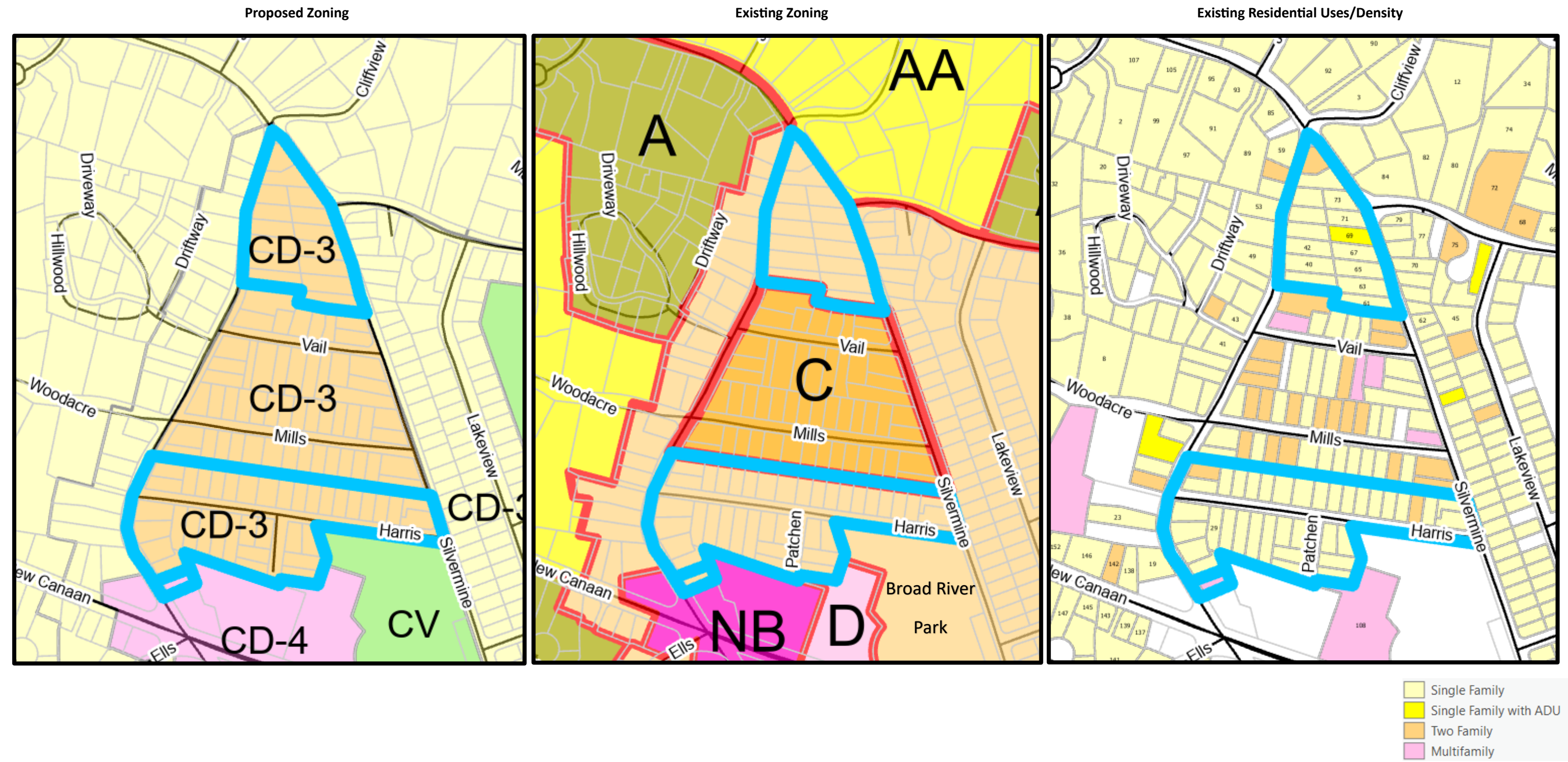
Low Street and Cleveland Terrace (4)

The Lowe Street and Cleveland Terrace neighborhoods make up 47 properties and are currently zoned as C Residence. This stretch of Lowe Street represents a gap between Neighborhood Business (mixed-use) to the south and D Residence (multifamily) to the north. Therefore, Staff recommends upzoning this area to the CD-4 (mixed-use) to allow for the zoning to match the immediately adjacent neighborhoods in terms of building types and residential density.



New Canaan Avenue/Silvermine Avenue

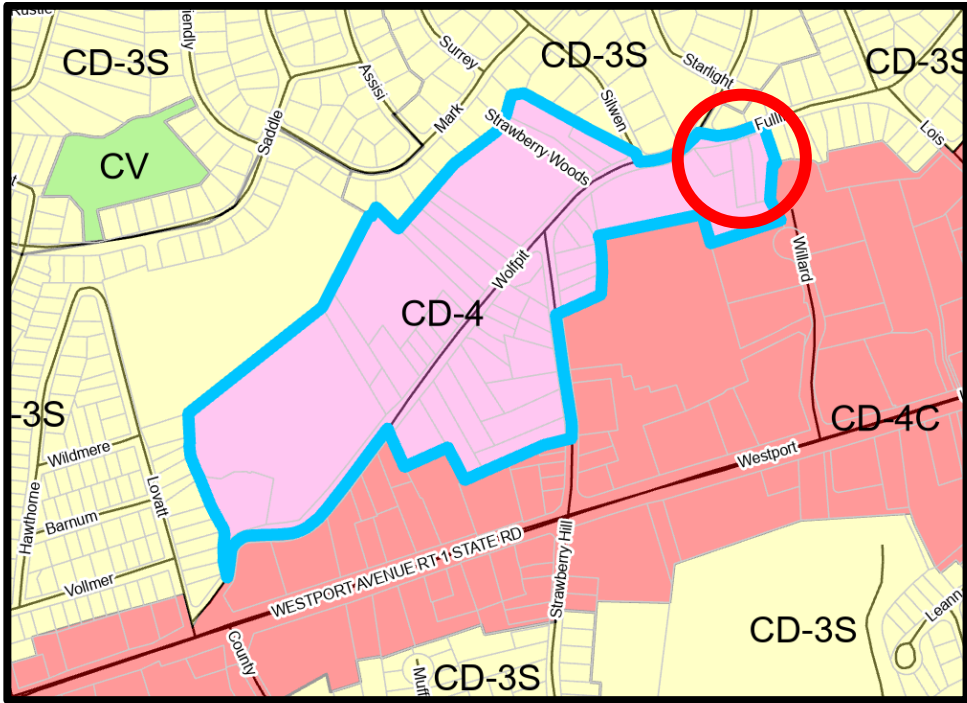
The western half of Silvermine Avenue when traveling northbound currently transitions back and forth between different zones. Broad River Park is immediately abutted by B Residence Zone along Harris Street, which then transitions to C Residence Zone along both Mills Street and Vail Street, before transitioning back to B Residence Zone for the properties at the northern half of Bartlett Avenue and the Silvermine-Bartlett-Cliffview intersection. Provided that mixed-use zoning exists in the immediate area along New Canaan Avenue, representing a good opportunity to create walkable streets to the businesses located there, as well as the existing neighborhoods that allow for duplexes, Staff recommends that this area, a total of 50 properties, be upzoned into the CD-3. What is interesting about this area, in the broader discussion on the appropriateness of upzoning from single-family to two-family is that Mills Street is currently zoned C Residence (one- and two-family), while Harris Street is zoned single-family and except for the street ends, the lots which are abutting each other appear to be identical and the rights-of-way for both streets measure the same width.



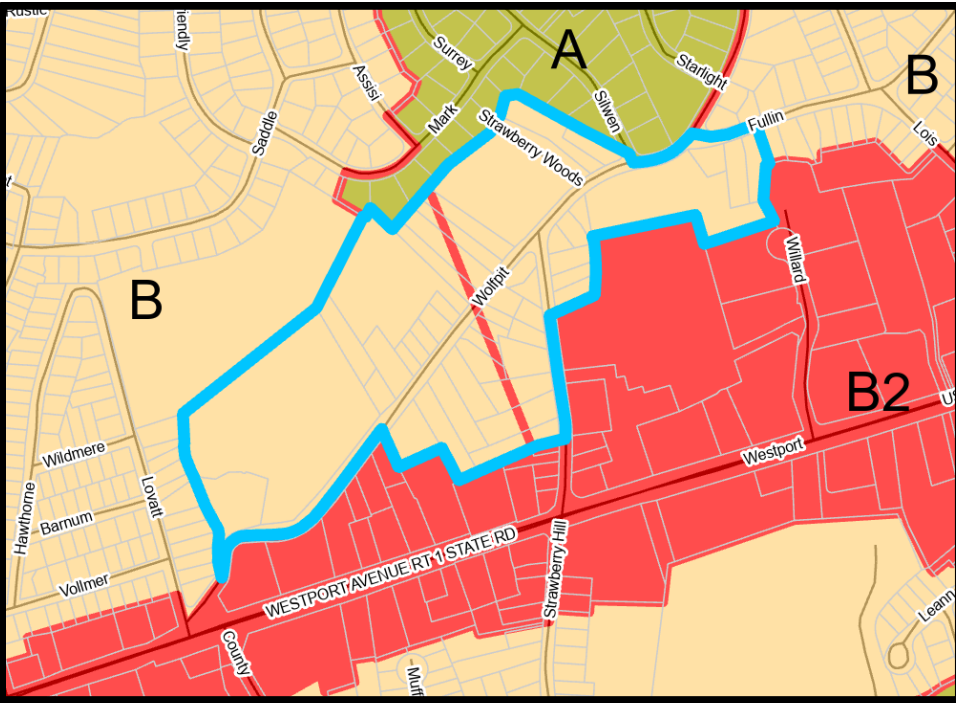
Wolfpit Avenue:

Wolfpit Avenue is currently zoned as B Residence (single-family) but has many existing multifamily developments like Dreamy Hollow which had been approved as Planned Residential Developments (PRD's or PUD's). Because of the proximity of the area to Westport Avenue as well as condominiums and apartment buildings being common in the area, Staff recommends that these 46 parcels be upzoned to the CD-4 Zone (mixed-use), with the exception of the three parcels circled in red, which probably should remain single-family.

Proposed Zoning



Existing Zoning



Existing Residential Uses/Density

